

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Monday, 2 March 2020

Report Title: Reducing Rough Sleeping

Report By: Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment

Key Decision: Y

Classification: Open

Purpose of Report

To update members on progress to reduce rough sleeping in East Sussex over the past 18 months. To seek approval to mobilise a new programme of interventions in 2020/21.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To acknowledge progress to reduce rough sleeping over the past 18 months**
- 2. To authorise expenditure of £1,584,518 to continue the programme of services on 2020/21**
- 3. To approve a 12 month extension to the existing contract with Sanctuary Supported Living for the RSI Assessment Centre**
- 4. To grant an exemption to the council's financial rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to enable the council to procure the outreach, day centre and Housing First service from the Seaview Project**
- 5. To grant an exemption to the council's financial rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to enable the council to procure the Rapid Rehousing Pathway service from Southdown Housing Association**
- 6. To grant an exemption to the council's financial operating rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to enable the council to procure a case management system from Inform**
- 7. To delegate authority to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to deliver the project to the relevant senior housing officer**
- 8. To delegate authority to the relevant senior housing officer, in consultation with the lead member, to draft a joint rough sleeping reduction strategy with the local authorities in East Sussex. The draft strategy will be presented to Cabinet later in the year**
- 9. To delegate authority to the relevant senior housing officer, in consultation with the lead member, to finalise arrangements for the mobilisation and delivery of the projects**
- 10. To delegate authority to the Chief Legal Officer to enter into contractual arrangements for the delivery of the projects**
- 11. To delegate authority to the relevant senior housing officer to agree adaptations to the services in 2020/21, if funding arrangements change, and to delegate authority to the Chief Legal Officer to agree contract variations as required**

Reasons for Recommendations

1. Hastings Borough Council is lead partner for a programme of activities to reduce rough sleeping in 2020/21.
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Background

1. The district and borough councils within East Sussex have been working collaboratively with the county council and partners across the statutory and community sector on a range of projects to reduce rough sleeping.
2. The projects are funded by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and form part of the government's national rough sleeping strategy. The strategy identifies 3 key areas of work; prevention, intervention and recovery, with a commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it completely by 2027.
3. Hastings and Eastbourne Rough Sleeping Initiative project - launched in July 2018, works with the most entrenched and complex rough sleepers across both towns. The aim of the project is to improve access and co-ordination of services through a multi-disciplinary team of health, mental health, social care, substance misuse and housing professionals. The project has also created new accommodation solutions, including temporary accommodation for rough sleepers leaving the streets and new Housing First units for individuals requiring the highest level of ongoing support.
4. Lewes, Wealden and Rother Rough Sleeping Initiative projects- launched in April 2019, aims to improve links with statutory services for rough sleepers in rural areas through a dedicated team of navigators. The navigators also provide ongoing tenancy sustainment services for former rough sleepers living in social housing.
5. Rapid Rehousing Pathway - launched in April 2019, this project works across the 5 local housing authority areas. The project supports rough sleepers with low / medium level needs (who would not be engaged through the rough sleeping initiatives) to find new accommodation. Ongoing tenancy sustainment support is then provided to minimise the risk of individuals returning to rough sleeping in the future.

Performance to date

6. In Hastings, between January 2019 and January 2020 a total of 79 rough sleepers were accommodated, and a further 19 cases at imminent risk of rough sleeping were successfully prevented.
 - Statutory placements for former rough sleepers – 19
 - Rough Sleeping Initiative placements – 27 (including 6 Housing First Units)
 - Rapid Rehousing Pathway – 19 (plus a further 19 cases at imminent risk of rough sleeping, who were successfully prevented)
 - Cold Weather Fund – 14 placements
7. Across East Sussex, the projects have achieved 104 temporary accommodation placements and 122 long term accommodation placements.

8. The average number of people rough sleeping on a typical night in November was 24, compared to 48 at the official count in November 2018. The average number of people rough sleeping in Hastings in February was 19.
9. The projects have strengthened strategic and operational level partnerships across housing, health, mental health, social care and substance dependency services. This has enabled us to mobilise the projects at pace and ensured delivery can continue to be adapted and refined.
10. Although work to date has focused on reducing rough sleeping, it is clear that a multi-disciplinary approach to service delivery could be applied in a range of scenarios, to improve outcomes for individuals with multiple and complex needs. Indeed, as the overall number of rough sleepers across East Sussex reduces, our activities must focus on effective prevention and recovery services.

Our approach in 2020/21

11. Funding for our current projects comes to an end in March 2020. The MHCLG has combined the current funding streams into a single grant in 2020/21. The grant will be for a fixed 12 month period, there is no indication if the funding will be continued beyond April 2021.
12. Hastings Borough Council led a successful bid worth £1,584,518 to continue activities to reduce rough sleeping. The bid included further funding for additional temporary accommodation solutions for rough sleepers, enhanced outreach services and new landlord incentives to improve access to the private rented sector.

Procurement

13. The services commissioned using this funding must be up and running by April 2020.
14. There is provision within the existing contract for the Assessment Centre for a 12 month extension until 31 March 2021, which will be funded using the grant.
15. There is no provision to extend the day centre, outreach and housing first contract and Rapid Rehousing Pathway. The timescale to mobilise the services is very short and we are therefore seeking an exemption to our financial rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures to commission the services directly from Southdown Housing Association and the Seaview Project, who have been successfully delivering the services in 2019/20.
16. The specifications for these services will be updated to reflect the grant funding requirements.

Grant Funding Requirements

17. MHCLG will be drafting a memorandum of understanding and revised delivery timetable. The grant will be paid in 2 tranches – the first payment in April 2020 and a second around October 2020.
18. The memorandum is likely to include a requirement for the five district and borough councils to agree a joint rough sleeping reduction strategy. The joint strategy will be linked to the

council's own Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which was adopted in December 2019 and includes a priority to reduce rough sleeping.

Challenges and Opportunities

19. Ongoing funding uncertainty – our projects are currently reliant on short-term grant funding. Key to the sustainability of these activities is to ensure that learning from the projects is embedded into core service delivery across all partners within the multi-disciplinary team. This is in-line with national priorities to improve rough sleeper prevention and recovery services, by improving access to services for individuals with multiple and complex needs.
20. Lack of long term accommodation – we have been working with a social housing providers to secure accommodation for our Housing First units. Turnover of social housing is low across East Sussex and this has created delays in people leaving temporary accommodation.
21. Increasing the supply of new affordable accommodation in Hastings and across the county is essential to address this issue in the long term. In the meantime, we also need to explore opportunities to engage with landlords to improve access to private rented accommodation for this client group.
22. Commissioning services – procurement processes, short mobilisation periods and lack of funding security have been challenging for many providers - particularly smaller, community organisations. The programme for 2020/21 is also subject to a challenging timescale, as the interventions must be up and running by April. In the long term, learning from the projects will be used to help design new services as part of our regular commissioning programme. An example of this is the recent review of the specification for floating and accommodation based support services.
23. Prevention – early identification of people at high risk of rough sleeping improves the effectiveness of support, this includes our application of the new duty to refer, which was introduced as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Urgency

24. This report is being considered under rule 26, general exceptions, of the access to information rules contained in the council's constitution. This is due to the short timescale to mobilise the project.

Timetable of Next Steps

25. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Revised specifications agreed with delivery partners	Updated contracts in place for 2020/21	31 March 2020	Strategic Housing and Projects Manager
Agree a joint rough sleeping reduction strategy	Joint strategy adopted	31 December 2020	Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment

with local authority partners in East Sussex			
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Wards Affected

(All Wards);

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 30.1

Have you used relevant project tools?: Y

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	N
Anti-Poverty	Y
Legal	Y

Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

Officer to Contact

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